Amateur Radio Newsline(tm) Report 1755 - April 1, 2011

Amateur Radio Newsline report number 1755 with a release date of Friday, April 1st, 2011 to follow in 5-4-3-2-1.

The following is a Q-S-T. Opposition grows to the proposed sell-off of 440 to 450 MHz, ham radio continues its role in Japan following the March 11th earthquake and tsunami, a major solar storm could bring more DX and lots of strange ham radio stories for April 1st. Hear it all on Amateur Radio Newsline(tm) report number 1755 coming your way right now.

(Billboard Cart Here)

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RESCUE RADIO: OPPOSITION GROWS TO SELLOFF OF 420 TO 440 MHZ

An article in USA Today about the concern by radio amateurs and others involved in rescue radio over aspects of House of Representatives measure H R 607 is sweeping the nation and its emergency preparedness community. And it turns out that there is growing opposition to a part of the bill that affects the 420 to 440 MHz band. Michael Grebert, KJ4ZZV, is here with the latest:

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According to the U-S-A Today article, those lining up in opposition to a provision in H-R 607 that would sell off 420 to 440 MHz as a way off offsetting part of the cost of establishing a new nationwide interoperable emergency system is growing. In fact, its starting to read like a whose who in emergency communications. This includes such notables as the National Weather Service, the International Association of Chiefs of Police and a the National Public Safety Telecommunications Council to name only a few.

As most of you are aware, Representative Peter King, of New York who is the chairman of the Homeland Security Committee, introduced legislation last month. Its purpose is to enhance emergency communications for first responders by providing them with exclusive bansdspace for public safety use.

Nobody opposes that idea. What is controversial is a provision of the measure that would allow the auctioning off of 420 to 440 MHz. Those who oppose that provision say that the spectrum in question is not just for radio hobbyists. Rather, it is also used by hundreds of thousands of Amateur Radio Emergency Service volunteers and severe-weather spotters working with National Weather Service and other agencies.

And among those speaking out is Harlin McEwen. McEwen s the chairman of a technology committee for the International Association of Chiefs of Police and a spokesman for the National Public Safety Telecommunications Council. Hes on record as saying that the reallocation of 420 to 440 MHz is a bad idea and one that's not good

for public safety.

But the U-S-A Today article is not the only one noting that emergency responders are taking issue with Representative King's band sell-off approach. Another in-depth piece the Great Falls Montana Tribune goes into even greater detail than U-S-A Today. Among other things, the Tribune article states that there are nearly 5,000 amateur radio volunteers in Montana, and many of them provide a backup communication system that emergency responders state wide and across the country depend on. This, when cellular telephones, satellite phones or other radio systems don't work.

Ryan Nicholls, the Director of the Office of Emergency Management in Springfield, Missouri takes it even a bit further. He notes that use of ham radio volunteers is the way in which that state plans to communicate between hospitals and the Red Cross in the event of an emergency. Nicholls notes that this is even written into that city's emergency operations plan.

Both articles do a good job of pointing out the false economy of selling off the 420 to 440 MHz band.

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, I'm Michael Grebert, KJ4ZZV, in Nashville for the Amateur Radio Newsline.

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And all this negative publicity may be taking its toll on at least one of those backing H R 607. Representative Billy Long of Missouri who is a co-sponsor of the bill is quoted in USA Today as saying that he will work to ensure that we are not cutting any vital emergency services and not adversely affecting ham radio operations.

You can read the entire USA Today article at tinyurl.com/4tvz4br. The Great Falls Tribune piece is at tinyurl.com/4typ6bg. (USA Today, Great Falls Tribune, N6ZXJ, W6RH, others)

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RESCUE RADIO: HAM RADIO SUPPORT CONTINUES FOLLOWING MARCH 11TH QUAKE

Ham radio remains an important part of recovery and relief efforts in Japan. This following the earthquake and tsunami that hit on March 11th that was followed by the still ongoing problems at the Fukushima nuclear electric generating plant. Amateur Radio Newsline's Norm Seeley, KI7UP reports:

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According to Steve Herman, W7VOA, the Japan Amateur Radio League or JARL has been involved in emergency communications support from the beginning of the triple pronged tragedy. Steve, who spent a week in Japan reporting for the Voice of America says that the initial traffic involved finding routes for those first and second responders trying reach the disaster areas. That was mainly done by JA3RL as control station. JA1RL took its place in the later stage in forming the

network for communications to and between disaster scenes.

Since then, volunteer medical staff who are hams have been to disaster areas. They have been supported by both the JARL and the Japanese Self Defense Forces. Additionally, hand-held transceivers have now been supplied to evacuation centers. Japan's Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications has provided special call signs for each H-T so that unlicensed people can use them.

As to use of the Internet by hams, Steve tells Newsline that there has been some traffic passed between Japan and Europe through WIRES chat room 0522. WIRES is Yaesu based radio to Internet connection system similar to Echolink. Details of the traffic is viewable in the Japanese language at twitter.com/#!/JARL_ARESC

And this late word from Jim Linton, VK3PC. He reports that a small amount of internal High Frequency communications for disaster relief is still being operated occasionally by some volunteer radio amateurs. But says Linton, the Japan Amateur Radio League Headquarters stations were off the air by Friday, March 25th, their local time. VHF and UHF operations are likely ongoing.

Obviously, this is an ongoing story and we will have more with it in the weeks ahead.

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, I'm Norm Seeley, KI7UP, in Scottsdale, Arizona.

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In his note to us, W7VOA did include a ray of hope for some. He says that he spotted a number of High Frequency yagi antennas in Sendai at some houses close to where the tsunami struck. The good news is that those were intact. (W7VOA, VK3PC, JARL, others)

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RESCUE RADIO: CHRISTCHURCH NZ QUAKE FOLLOW-UP

A follow-up to the work by hams in New Zealand following the earthquake that hit the city of Christchurch last month. Amateur Radio Newsline's Jim Meachen, ZL2BHF, brings us up to date:

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Audio report only. Hear it by downloading the mp3 file of this weeks newscasat at www.arnewsline.org

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Another example of ham radio emergency communications not only in first response but also has an ongoing search and rescue tool that helps to save lives. (ZL2BHF)

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BREAK 1

>From the United States of America, We are the Amateur Radio Newsline, heard on bulletin stations around the world including the W9RCA repeater serving Indianapolis, Indiana.

(5 sec pause here)

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RESCUE RADIO: NEW JERSEY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB PROVIDES RED CROSS COMMMS DURING RECENT FLOODING

The rains came to New Jersey and ham radio was ready. Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, is in the newsroom with more:

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Ham radio was an essential communications tool during the recent heavy flooding in Northern New Jersey. That's where the New Providence Amateur Radio Club in the Watchung Hills area was asked to set up amateur radio stations in Red Cross vehicles which were operating in four counties heavily affected by the deluge.

The club members were tasked with supplying communications for Red Cross cars and vans which were performing damage assessment in the affected areas. Communications between these vehicles and a central Command Post at the Chapter House in Ridgewood, kept track of the progress of the appraisal process.

Three members of the NPARC Emergency Team responded on Monday March 14, and two members were present during the rest of the week. These included David Berkley, K2MUN, of Westfield, Vince Lobosco, KC2IZK, of Fanwood, Barry Cohen, K2JV of Berkeley Heights, Barb Flynn, KC2YJB of Summit, Tony Izzo, K2AMI of River Edge and Hillary Zaenchik, KC2HLA, of Basking Ridge.

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, I'm Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, in the newsroom in Los Angeles.

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While some operators spent their time in the field with Red Cross personnel, others were stationed in the control center with two of the relief agency's officials. (eHam, others)

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LICENSING: NCVEC QPC DELETES EXTRA CLASS SPREAD SPECTRUM QUESTION

The Question Pool Committee of the National Council of Volunteer Examiner Coordinator has decided to delete a question from the Amateur Extra class question pool. One dealing with Spread Spectrum technology.

In March, the FCC eliminated the requirement that amateur stations transmitting Spread Spectrum use Automatic Power Control to reduce transmitter power. At the same time, the Commission reduced the maximum power of a Spread Spectrum emission from 100 to 10 watts PEP.

According to the Question Pool Committee, when the Spread Spectrum rule change goes into effect, the answer to question E1F13 in the Amateur Extra class question pool will no longer be correct. It must be deleted by the time the new rule on Spread Spectrum goes into effect 30 days after publication in the Federal Register. (NCVEC)

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ENFORCEMENT: FCC AFFIRMS $20,000 FINE FOR UNLICENSED OPERATION ON 156.8 MHZ

The FCC has affirmed a $20,000 monetary forfeiture issued to Vincent E. Aversa, Jr. of Indialantic, Florida. This, for his alleged willful and repeated violations of section 301 of the Communications Act of 1934 and section 80.13 of the Commission's rules.

The violations involve what the FCC claims is Aversa's purported operation of radio transmission equipment without a license on 156.80 MHz. This is the International Distress, Safety, and Calling Channel in the Marine Radio Service. It's also known as Channel 16.

On February 8, 2011, the Enforcement Bureau's Tampa, Florida Office issued a Notice of Apparent Liability for Forfeiture in the amount of $20,000 to Aversa. Since that time Aversa has not filed a response to the NAL.

Based on the information before it, the FCC has now affirmed forfeiture and has given Avisa the customary 30 days to pay the amount in full or to file an appeal. (FCC)

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COMMUNICATION: 51% OF ALL AMERICANS ON FACEBOOK

More than half of Americans age 12 and up are communicating on Facebook. This according to Arbitron and Edison Research in their upcoming 2011 Infinite Dial Report.

Edison Research spokesman Tom Webster said they have been tracking the growth of Facebook since 2008. In that time they have watched the social network grow from 8% penetration just three years ago to 51% today. This, says Webster makes it the dominant player in social networking, with more users than MySpace, LinkedIn and even Twitter.

The study, conducted in January, indicates that 51% of all teens, men and women have a profile on the Facebook. In another area, the research company says that back in 2001, that some 98% of those surveyed used television and 96% used radio. By comparison, in 2011, while television use remained the same, local AM/FM radio use had dropped. (Edison OnLine Reasearch)

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NAMES IN THE NEWS: K0NEB PRESENTS HAMVENTION - THE EARLY YEARS ON YOU TUBE

A new slide show that depicts the early years of the Dayton Hamvention is now available for public viewing. The presentation titled "The Early Years" was produced by Kit Building expert Joe Eisenberg, K0NEB, of Lincoln, Nebraska for presentation at a recent meeting of the Dayton Amateur Radio Association. Set to the music of Mason Williams and Mannheim Steamroller the show contains photos from Joe's collection dating from about 1984 to 2001. This and all of Joe's slide shows are available on-line at www.youtube.com/joehusker. (K0NEB)

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HAMVENTION NEWS: ON LINE RESERVATION SYSTEM NOW OPERATING PROPERLY

Bill Curtice, WA8APB, says that the Hamvention's on-line reservation system at www.hamvention.org is functioning properly. In a posting to thr on-line Hamvention List that he moderates, Curtice says that those in charge are aware that a month or more ago there had been a problem with Flea Market spaces that was isolated to pricing of end-cap spaces that could have caused an issue with credit card statements. This was a database error that they believed was corrected.

Curtice says that the fix required hand editing, which took time and notes that it is entirely possible that some requests were missed. If you are one of those, Curtice asks that you contact them directly and that they will be happy to remedy the situation for you.

WA8APB also notes there is some confusion about General Admission Tickets vs. Vendor Admission Tickets. Flea Market Vendors should always choose Vendor Admission, not General Admission, unless directed otherwise by the Hamvention. Curtice says that this has caused some problems as well. (WA8APB via Hamventionr List)

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HAM HAPPENINGS: THE NORTH CORK RALLY AND ELECTRONICS FAIR IN IRELAND IN SEPTEMBER

If you are planning a trip this fall to Erin's Isle, then you might want to include stopping by Irelands North Cork Radio Group second annual rally and electronics fair on Sunday September the 11th. The venue is the Blarney Golf Resort in Tower County Cork. The doors open to the public at 11.30 a.m. local time and the hamfest will run throughout the afternoon. Dealers on hand as of this writing include South East Communications, Long Communications and JBT Trading. Further details can be found via the group's website, www.ei1nc.com.com. (IRTS)

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HAM HAPPENINGS: INTERNATIONAL MARCONI DAY - APRIL 30TH

And a reminder that International Marconi Day takes place this year on Saturday the 30th of April. This is not a contest but there are several nice awards available for working the officially listed stations, each of which has an historic connection with Marconi. The event is organized by the Cornish Amateur Radio Club. For more information please visit the club's website at crac.g4usb.net/cracblog. (RSGB)

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BREAK 2

This is ham radio news for today's radio amateur. From the United States of America, We are the Amateur Radio Newsline with links to the world from our only official website at www.arnewsline.org and being relayed by the volunteer services of the following radio amateur:

(5 sec pause here)

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WEIRD SCIENCE: MAN BECOMES DENTAL TRANSMITTER

>From the "stranger than strange file" comes this story about some odd radio transmissions. You are not going to believe where they came from. Bruce Tennant, K6PZW, tries to put the pieces together.

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We have all heard stories about people who had dental work and then started hearing radio signals due to the amalgam in their teeth. Well, this one goes a bit further. It seems a man, who has asked us to keep his identify private, had major reconstructive jaw surgery in the medical center of the University of Southern North Dakota. This involved some dental wiring and internal jaw bracing. Somehow, some way, the new metal work came into contact with previously existing silver fillings - that combination created some sort of transmitter.

The condition was first noticed when the patient coughed. His loud coughing started reverberating through the medical center's public address system causing everyone to wonder what was going on. Then a conversation he had with his wife came through some car radios in the hospital parking lot, specifically at the lower end of the FM broadcast band. Finally, physicians relaxing in the doctor's lounge heard loud scratching noises through a desktop FM radio - this turned out to be the patient brushing his teeth. The man himself found out what was going when his sneezing fit was heard over an MP3 player being used by a patient two floors up, who came down to see what the racket was.

Due to confidentiality riles, no one would talk to us on the record about this case. But the man in question, know known by local amateur radio clubs as the first "human repeater," has had the necessary wire adjustments for this strange phenomenon to go away. He was said to be much relieved that he can now clear his throat and not worry

about blowing away someone's hearing aid.

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, I'm Bruce Tennant in Los Angeles on this first day of April.

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A spokesman for the Federal Medical Radio Commission which investigates these weird April 1st phenomena says that this is one of those odd instances where the forces of nature and advances in technology combine to wreak havoc on the radio spectrum. None the less it is considering issuing the unlucky patient a Notice of Violation for operating as a radio transmitter without a license. (K6PZW)

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HAM RADIO IN SPACE: SA AMSAT POSTPONES SPACE SYMPOSIUM

South Africa AMSAT has postponed its Space Symposium originally planned for April 2nd to a later date. School holidays in the city of Gauteng and too many other amateur radio related activities around the same time seem to be one of the reasons for the low registration rate. A new date will be announced in the near future. (SA AMSAT)

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RADIO IN SPACE: NASA TO MAKE FINAL EFFORT TO CONTACT STUCK MARS ROVER

NASA will make a last-ditch effort to communicate with the stuck Mars rover Spirit, which fell silent a little over a year ago. The solar-powered rover became stuck in what's believed to be loose sand in April 2009. Despite efforts to maneuver it free, Spirit remained stuck and could not tilt itself toward the sun as the Martian winter approached.

Without an adequate amount of energy reaching its solar panels, it went into hibernation last March. Engineers had expected Spirit to wake up once there was maximum sunlight where it's trapped. But the South Mars summer solstice came and went earlier with no response.

Ground controllers are attempting to contact the Spirit over a wide range of frequencies and at various times during the day. This, in case the rover's internal clock stopped working and it lost track of its Earth time schedule. They also are commanding the Spirit to turn on its backup radio transmitter in case the main one failed.

If there's still no contact with Spirit within the next month, NASA says that it will scale back its listening operation for the out of service rover and then focus on collecting Mars data using Spirit's still operational twin named Opportunity. (Science OnLine)

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DX

In DX, EI9FBB, will be operating portable 3A from Monaco from April

20th to the 22nd. Activity will be limited to the afternoons. All QSOs will be uploaded to Logbook to the World and eQSL. For those who need a paper QSL, please send yours along with sufficient postage to his home callsign as listed on QRZ.com.

UV5EVJ is on the air as 5X1VJ from Uganda through June 8th. Activity is on the HF bands using CW and SSB. QSL via his home callsign.

EA8AY will be active from the Canary Islands as ED8A during the CQWW WPX CW Contest from May 28th to the 29th as a Single-Operator, All-Band entry. QSL only via Logbook to the World.

Lastly, the United Kingdom's Macclesfield and District Amateur Radio Society will be operational from the Isle of Arran off the coast of Scotland from April 2nd to the 7th. Four club members will be transmitting on the HF bands and making as many contacts across the UK, Europe and around the world as possible. A special commemorative card will be available. QSL as directed on the air.

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THAT FINAL ITEM: SPECTRUM USE FEES ON THROUGH THE HORIZON

And finally this week, as the U-S government looks for new ways to increase revenues without raising taxes, some of the bean counters in Washington are getting very creative. But it may be ham radio operators who wind up paying in the end. By shortwave, our April 1st roving reporter Pierre Pullinmyleg has details from the nation's capitol:

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The bill in Congress that would auction off most of the 70-centimeter ham band to commercial interests has been getting the headlines in amateur radio news reports, but there is about to be another bill introduced that could be even worse for radio amateurs. While it would leave all of our allocations intact, this new plan calls for auctioning off the ionosphere itself, layer-by-layer, to the highest bidder. The F-Layer would be put up for bids first, because it permits the greatest propagation distance for radio signals and because it is actually comprised of two layers, F-1 and F-2, so it is expected that it would generate higher bids than the other layers. The F-layer auction would be followed by an auction of the E-layer and finally the D-layer. Layers A through C continue to be under strict military control.

The successful bidders would pay large amounts of money up front to the U-S government and would then recover their investments by charging radio users access fees to bounce signals off of the various layers. Fees would vary by frequency, time of day and distance to be covered, and would have to be paid in advance. Radio transmitters would be programmed to send out a digital license code, which would permit signals to access the layer in question. Credits would be applied to the user's account if the ionosphere does not support the registered communication at the time of transmission.

In addition, amateurs conducting moonbounce or satellite communications would need to pay a transit fee for passing signals through each layer of the ionosphere. These fees would be higher during the day, when the D-layer is energized. The only radio transmissions that would not be subject to these fees would be those on line-of-sight paths. There would be special discounts for emergency service and military users, but everyone would have to pay something.

The bill was scheduled to be introduced today, April the first, and has not yet received a bill number.

>From the U-S Capitol subway, this is Pierre Pullinmyleg reporting for Newsline.

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Pierre will, of course, keep you posted on any developments regarding this proposed legislation. More than likely, he will have his next report a year or so from today. (The Pierre Pullinmyleg Institute of April 1st News)

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NEWSCAST CLOSE

With thanks to Alan Labs, AMSAT, the ARRL, the CGC Communicator, CQ Magazine, the FCC, the Ohio Penn DX Bulletin, Radio Netherlands, Rain, the RSGB, the Southgate News and Australia's WIA News, that's all from the Amateur Radio Newsline(tm). Our e-mail address is newsline@arnewsline.org. More information is available at Amateur Radio Newsline's(tm) only official website located at www.arnewsline.org. You can also write to us or support us at Amateur Radio Newsline(tm), 28197 Robin Avenue, Santa Clarita California, 91350

For now, with Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, at the editors desk, I'm Fred Vobbe, W8HDU, saying 73, a very happy and laugh filled April 1st, and we thank you for listening.

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